

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KUWAIT 03429 201319Z

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ACTION NEA-07

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R 201215Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3527

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T KUWAIT 3429

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR KU XF

SUBJECT: KUWAITI VIEWS ON CURRENT MIDEAST DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: KUWAITI FONMIN SABAH REFLECTS INTENSE GOK INTEREST
IN SUCCESS OF SECRETARY'S MISSION IN MIDEAST, WITH CONCERN AT
SAME TIME THAT INTERIM ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT WILL FURTHER
DIVID ARABS AMONG THEMSELVES. THEREFORE, HE OPINES, THERE
NO TIME TO LOSE IN TACKLING GOLAN HEIGHTS PROBLEM. FONMIN IS
UNCHARACTERISTICALLY CRITICAL OF PALESTINIANS WHO, ESPECIALLY IN
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SECRET

PAGE 02 KUWAIT 03429 201319Z

VIEW SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, HE THINKS COULD BECOME

ISOLATED IF THEY CANNOT STOP QUARRELING AMONG THEMSELVES, STOP OBSTRUCTING MOVES TOWARD SETTLEMENT, AND COME UP WITH CONSTRUCTIVE VIEWS ON WHERE THEY CAN REALISTICALLY FIT INTO FINAL SCHEME OF THINGS. FONMIN BELIEVES THAT DESPITE THEIR EFFORT PUT UP FRONT OF REASONABLENESS, IRAQI BAATHIS NOT LIKELY FUNDAMENTALLY TO CHANGE THEIR CONSPIRATORIAL POLICIES TOWARD THEIR NEIGHBORS OR DOWN GULF. HE THINKS MIDEASTFOR IS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO BAHRAIN BUT, WHILE HE WELL AWARE THAT SOVIET BASES IN IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN ARE MENACE TO AREA SECURITY, HE HAS NO CLEAR THOUGHTS ON HOW THEY CAN BE ELIMINATED. FONMIN SABAH BELIEVES SAUDI RECOGNITION OF SOVIET UNION IS ON THE HORIZON. END SUMMARY

1. KUWAITI FONMIN SABAH AL-AHMAD AND I HAD PRIVATE CHAT AT HIS HOME AUG 18 ON EVE HIS DEPARTURE FOR NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN LIMA AND UPCOMING UN SESSIONS. FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE OF INTEREST:

2. ARAB-ISRAEL. FONMIN WISHED SECRETARY KISSINGER EVERY POSSIBLE SUCCESS IN HIS PRESENT HIGHLY DELICATE MISSION. THIS MISSION HAD POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS. INTERIM ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT WOULD BE IMPORTANT STEP FORWARD TOWARD SETTLEMENT, YET IT WOULD INCREASE DIVISIVENESS AMONG ARAB STATES. SABAH HOPED SECRETARY WOULD MOVE SWIFTLY TO TACKLE GOLAN HEIGHTS PROBLEM. I RECALLED SECRETARY'S COMMENT LONG TIME AGO THAT MIDEAST PROBLEM UNIQUELY DIFFICULT IN THAT PROGRESS ON ROAD TO SETTLEMENT BECAME TOUGHER BY THE STEP, NOT EASIER. I ADDED FONMIN COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT SECRETARY FULLY AWARE OF URGENCY OF TACKLING OTHER ASPECTS OF ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM WITH ALL POSSIBLE SPEED. SABAH SAID FOR SECRETARY MERELY TO VISIT DAMASCUS THIS TIME WAS GOING TO BE HELPFUL.

3. SABAH SAW SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RAPPROCHEMENT AS FAVORABLE FROM KUWAIT'S VIEWPOINT BUT UNFAVORABLE TO PALESTINIANS. FONMIN STRUCKOUT AT ARAFAT, DESCRIBING HIM AS POWERLESS TO CONTROL QUARRELING, FRACTIOUS FEDAYEEN. IF PALESTINIANS INSISTED ON REJECTING EVERY MOVE TOWARD PEACEFUL SOLUTION IN MIDEAST, HE ASSERTED, THEY COULD BE THE LOSERS IN THE END. (COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME I HAVE HEARD KUWAIT FONMIN EVINCE REAL EXASPERATION WITH PALESTINIANS. I THINK HIS REMARKS SHOW DEPTH OF KUWAITI EAGERNESS FOR SUCCESS OF US EFFORTS IN

SECRET

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PAGE 03 KUWAIT 03429 201319Z

MIDEAST. SABAH ALSO SUGGESTS HERE THAT IF SYRIANS OBTAIN ANY SATISFACTION ON GOLAN HEIGHTS, AND FIND IT EXPEDIENT NOT TO PRESS JORDAN TO RESTORE FEDAYEEN PRESENCE OR EVEN PLO POLITICAL ROLE ON EAST BANK, THEY MAY WIND UP "SELLING OUT" THE PALESTINIANS AS DID THE EGYPTIANS AND JORDANIANS - PARTICULARLY IF THE PALESTINIAN MODERATES CANNOT BEAT "THE SPOILERS" INTO LINE AND SPELL OUT MORE CLEARLY WHERE THE PALESTINIANS COULD REALISTICALLY FIT INTO THE FINAL SCHEME OF THINGS.)

4. IRAQ. SABAH SAID PERSISTENT REPORTS OF IRAQI MILITARY MAN-EUVERING NEAR IRAQI-KUWAITI BORDER APPEARED EXAGGERATED. FOR EXAMPLE ONE ALARM HAD TURNED OUT TO BE MARCHING EXERCISE IN BASRA SPORTS STADIUM. NEVERTHELESS FONMIN TOOK PESSIMISTIC LONG-RANGE VIEW. IRAQI BAATHIS WERE INBRED, SUSPICIOUS, CONSPIRATORIAL BY NATURE. WHILE PUTTING ON FRONT OF SWEET REASONABLENESS, THEY WERE CONTINUING TO SUPPORT REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS AND TO PLOT AGAINST NEIGHBORS. THEY WERE INSISTING ON THEIR RIGHTS TO KUWAITI ISLANDS (WARBA AND HALF OF BUBYAN), AND SETTLEMENT OF IRAQI-KUWAITI BORDER PROBLEM WAS AS REMOTE AS EVER. THEY WOULD REMAIN IMPLACABLY OPPOSED TO THEIR SYRIAN COUSINS AS WELL. SABAH RECALLED PRESIDENT BAKR HAD ONCE OBSERVED THAT IRAQI AND SYRIAN BAATHIS WERE TWO-HEADED SNAKE (ALL TOO APT A METAPHOR), WITH ONE HEAD IN BAGHDAD AND THE OTHER IN DAMASCUS; AND ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO CUT OFF ONE OF THEM.

5. GULF SECURITY AND MIDEASTFOR. FONMIN SABAH REITERATED KUWAITI VIEW THAT GULF STATES SHOULD ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO AREA PROBLEMS SUCH AS KUWAIT-IRAQI BORDER DISPUTE, DHOFAR, ETC. RATHER THAN ENTERING INTO FORMAL PACT PURPOSE OF WHICH IS NOT CLEAR (KUWAIT 3072). ALSO, GULF SECURITY WAS RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES THEMSELVES, AND GREAT POWER RIVALRY IN GULF MUST BE AVOIDED. IN THIS CONNECTION HE OPINED US NAVY PRESENCE ON BAHRAIN WAS EMBARRASSMENT TO BAHRAIN; IT HAD NO MILITARY CAPABILITY, DID NOT PROVIDE BAHRAIN WITH SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL INCOME, AND OFFERED SOVIETS EXCUSE FOR MILITARY PRESENCE OF ITS OWN IN IRAQ AND SOUTH YEMEN. I OF COURSE DID NOT MENTION BAHRAINI TERMINATION NOTICE BUT SAID WE CONSIDERED MIDEASTFOR EARNEST OF OUR INTEREST IN GULF AREA. I ADDED I THOUGHT IT NAIVE IN EXTREME TO THINK ELIMINATION OF US NAVY IN BAHRAIN WOULD OF ITSELF ENGENDER PRESSURE ON SOVIETS TO RELINQUISH THEIR BASES. SUCH PRESSURE WOULD HAVE TO COME DIRECTLY FROM
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 KUWAIT 03429 201319Z

ARAB STATES INVOLVED. I SAID WE AGREED AREA SECURITY WAS RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES CONCERNED, BUT UNILATERAL ADVICE TO BAHRAIN TO RID ITSELF OF MIDEASTFOR WAS NOT A STEP IN DIRECTION OF BETTER SECURITY. FONMIN DENIED GOK HAD ADVISED BAHRAINIS TO TERMINATE US NAVY. (COMMENT: I CERTAINLY QUESTION THAT STATEMENT). FONMIN ENDED WEAKLY WITH HOPE THAT AREA DEVELOPMENTS WOULD IN TIME BRING ABOUT TERMINATION OF SOVIET MILITARY PRESENCE.

6. SAUDI ARABIA. FONMIN SABAH BELIEVED SAUDI RECOGNITION OF SOVIET UNION IS ON THE HORIZON.
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